THE PRAIRIE CHICKEN.

A Queer, Shy Bird, Yet It Loves to Be Near the Homes of Men.

The pinnated grouse or, as it is commonly called, the prairie chicken, is a queer bird. Shy, and often difficult to approach, it still loves to be in the vicinity of human habitations. It has followed the farmer from the Western Reserve to the prairies of Illinois, across the Mississippi, and it is now beginning to be abundant in the western counties of Kansas and Nebraska and in Eastern Colorado.

Before it has fled the prairie sharp-tailed grouse that formerly was found in the uplands of Iowa, Nebraska and Dakota. Following it is the quail or Bob White—the bird of the underbrush and timber, as the prairie chicken is of cornfield and stubble. It has come with the homesteamer and with the meadow lark and welcomes the robins, bluebirds and warblers that arrive only when orchards are set out and timber claims are well under way.

In some respects the game bird of the plains changes his habits with his habitat. Especially is this noticeable during the breeding season. The prairie chicken in Illinois will lay its eggs and rear its young in the same field where it will be hunted later in the season. But in the Platte valley in Nebraska it makes its nests on the islands. These islands are low, fringed with brush and covered with luxuriant grasses that are not cut until late in the autumn. Here there is absolutely no danger of molestation from man, and prairie fires are comparatively unknown. Late fires cook probably one-third of the eggs that are laid on the uplands.

The "booming" by the river has stopped. The male birds are already on the uplands. Amid the carex and wild grass, under plum brush and beside the osiers the young birds are getting fat. Their mothers teach them to exercise their wings, and their eyes are sufficiently bright to detect a grasshopper or a butterfly many yards away. But this kind of life can not last forever. It is early in July. The click of the mower floats down from the rolling prairies above the river. Oats are ripening, and the wheat will soon be ready for the reaper. The river grass is drying. It is time for flight. It seems as though this migration is preconcerted. Early in July the females bring their broods together, and for a couple of days there is an incessant flight to the north and south. Then the islands are deserted until the next spring.

The hunting season should not begin before the middle of August, and farmers as a rule comply with the regulations of the game law. But every town has a few self-styled sportsmen, who commence to destroy chickens and quail before the young birds have their power of flight fully developed. This makes harder work and longer trips for those who shoot only in the open season. Still such a state of affairs can not be helped until the West makes provisions for the rigid enforcement of the game laws already enacted, but which are practically a dead letter. Were sportsmen's clubs an institution west as well as east of the Mississippi, the matter would soon rectify itself.—W. M. Wolfe, in Outing.

THE COMING METAL.

Is Aluminum to Supplant Steel in the Immediate Future.

A newly built steel steamer from Italy is exciting some curiousity in this harbor, principally because it is an Italian built vessel, and is considered the forerunner of a fleet of vessels of the same metal to take the place of the modern boats in carrying trade. In all probability, however, the day of steel is almost over.

Aluminum will soon take its place. A metal as little liable to tarnish in air or water, as little or less affected by acids than gold, twice as strong as steel and one-third the weight, as malleable and as ductile as gold, aluminum offers advantages to the shipbuilders as it does to the bridgebuilders, to the machinist and to all engaged in mechanical arts in which any metal is employed, that can not be ignored; and as we have had occasion to say previously, the only thing that stands in the way of its substitution for steel and iron, and perhaps for copper, tin, lead and every other metal except zinc, which has uses peculiar to itself, is the cost of production from the ore.

Aluminum is the most abundant of all metals contained in the earth's crust, being a constituent of all clays, and a slight improvement in the method of reducing it will bring its cost down to such a point that iron and steel at present prices would be dear by comparison, because of the better use that can be made of this lighter and yet stronger metal.

Its cost now is sixty cents a pound. When it falls to ten it will be much cheaper than steel at five cents. It is being manufactured in this country and in England and earnest scientific minds are occupied from day to day in experimental processes of its reduction from the ore with the view of producing it in such abundance as will enable the substitution of it in all mechanical arts for steel.

Any day the process by which this can be accomplished may be discovered and perfected and the price drop to a few few cents a pound. Then vessels of war and peace will be constructed of it that will be stronger than steel ships and lighter than those of wood. The navigable waters of the globe will be increased very largely—some say two-thirds—by the lighter draught of the vessels, and the speed produced by engines of the same horse power as are now used in iron and steel steamers will be very much greater.

The engines themselves may be made of aluminum and being stronger, as well as lighter, would give a power which no engine of the day can reach. In short, a metal revolution seems at hand, and the time coming when a six-day European steamer of the present structure will be looked upon as a lumbering old machine, no more to be compared with the speedy aluminum vessel than the old-time wooden frigate is to a man-of-war of to-day.—Brooklyn Citizen.

—A Macomb County, Michigan, farmer has harvested 604 bushels of good oats from twelve acres of ground.

HOUSEHOLD BREVITIES.

—Shrunken, half-worn bed blankets or comforts, past using on a bed, make good pads to put under a stair carpet.

—Fried Apples.—Wash, quarter and core good tart apples. Put into a frying pan with a little water added, boil until nearly tender, then add sugar and butter and cook until tender and brown.—Good Housekeeping.

—A new remedy for biliousness is known as the "Bombay oyster." It is usually consumed before breakfast, and is simply an egg dropped unbroken into a tumbler, and deluged with vinegar, and sprinkled with pepper and salt.

—Stewed Turnips.—Peel the turnips and cut them in pieces about half an inch square; salt them, then steam them until tender, put them into a saucepan rnd cover them with sweet milk. Add butter and pepper and let them simmer for half an hour.—Housekeeper.

—When tablecloths are worn beyond mending cut square pieces from the best parts of them and hem them neatly. They make nice napkins for the little children to use at the table, and also do nicely for them to carry their lunches to school in, for if they are stained or lost it will not matter much, as your sets will not be broken.—American Agriculturist.

—Potato Pancakes.—Boil and mash two or three large mealy potatoes, add a tablespoonful of butter, a tablespoonful of salt and a little white pepper, add a cupful of milk or cream and two well beaten eggs, and add sufficient flour to make a good dough to handle; have the frying pan hot and butter it freely, take a large tablespoonful of the mixture, flatten it with the hand into thin cakes, cook brown on both sides, butter them and fold one-half over the other; serve hot with cold sliced meat.—Boston Herald.

—Brown Soup.—Simmer together one quart of sliced potatoes and one-third as much of the thin brown shavings (not thicker than a sixpence) from the top crust of a whole wheat loaf of bread, in two quarts of water. The crusts must not be burned or blackened, and must not include any of the soft portion of the loaf. When the potatoes are tender, mash all through a colander. Flavor with two cups of strained stewed tomatoes, a little salt, and return to the fire; when hot, add a half cup of cream, and serve at once. If care has been taken to prepare the crusts as directed, this soup will have a brown color and a fine pungent flavor, exceedingly pleasant to the taste.

—The true way to cook macaroni is to drop it in boiling water and boil sharply till done. When this is accomplished dash some cold water in the pan to check the boiling. Then strain off the water, and it is ready for use. Treated in this way macaroni eats short and crisp. Different sorts of paste differ as to the time they take cooking; the ordinary pipe macaroni will take about twenty minutes, but the safest way is to taste it. When the macaroni has been boiled in this way and strained, lay it in a pie dish, cover it with good milk or cream, season it either with salt and cayenne and thin slices of rich cheese, if you wish it to be savory, or with sugar, cinnamon or nutmeg and pieces of butter, if it is to be sweet, and bake in a rather quick oven.

FAMILY SCRAP BASKET.

Interesting and Useful Bits of Household Fact and Fancy.

For faded green blinds, rub on a little linseed oil.

Put bits of camphor gum in trunks or drawers to prevent the mice from doing any injury.

To freshen leather chair seats, valises, bags, etc., rub them with the well-beaten white of an egg.

To prevent tin pans from rusting, rub fresh lard on them, and set in a hot oven until thoroughly heated.

Soak clothes, that fade, over night in water in which has been dissolved one ounce of sugar of lead to a pailful of rain water.

When washing fine white flannel, add a tablespoonful of pulverized borax to a pailful of water. This will keep them soft and white.

To banish red ants from the pantries, strew whole cloves around the shelves. The same is also considered a good moth exterminator.

To keep flat-irons clean and smooth, rub them with a piece of wax done up in a cloth, then scour or rub them on a paper strewn with coarse salt.

Oil of turpentine, or benzine, will remove spots of paint or varnish from cotton or woolen goods. They should be washed in soap-suds after the application.

If paint has been spattered on window panes, wet the spots with water and rub thoroughly with a new silver dollar; or they may be washed with hot, sharp vinegar.

To set delicate colors in embroidered handkerchiefs, soak them ten minutes before washing in a pail of water in which a dessertspoonful of turpentine has been stirred.

When a stove is cracked, a cement may be made of wood ashes and salt, in equal proportions, mixed to a paste with cold water. Fill the cracks with this when the stove is cool, and it will soon harden.

Steel pens are destroyed by the acid in the ink. If an old nail or old steel pen is put in the ink, the acid therein will exhaust itself on them, and pens in daily use will remain in good condition much longer.

When mattresses are stained, take starch wet into a paste with cold water. Spread this on the stain, first putting the mattress in the sun. In an hour or two rub this off, and if not clean, repeat the process.

To clean hair-brushes, put a tablespoonful of ammonia into tepid water, dip them up and down until clean, then dry with the bristles down. In place of the ammonia they may be cleaned by using a teaspoonful of soda.

Ivory may be bleached by placing it for an hour in a solution of alum; then polish it with a piece of woolen, and wrap it in linen to dry. Another method is to take peroxide of hydrogen, and to one pint of it add one ounce of aqua ammonia. Warm it and soak the ivory for twenty-four hours; then dry and polish with chalk.—Good Housekeeping.

OF GENERAL INTEREST.

—Somebody estimates that it would take ten ordinary locomotives to draw the silver now in the United States Treasury vaults, but there will be a great deal of it drawn out through other motives.—Philadelphia Ledger.

—A few weeks since a London clerk attempted suicide. The bullet lodged in his brain and he was taken to the hospital unconscious. He has now recovered, the bullet, which remains in his brain, causing him no inconvenience.

—A fruit farm in Palatka, Fla., sells for a nickel all the cocoanuts that a person can take away in his pockets. Several, who thought they saw a good thing in this, tried it and lost their nickel. The nuts had the shells on, and would not go in any pocket.

—A Piute brave walked into the Colfax Sentinel office the other day to see the paper printed. He was in full dress, with feather and linen duster. The foreman asked "Afraid-to-wash-your-face" why he was not in the hop field. He said: "Me no like pickum hops, too much stickum hands. My woman get $1.75 a day."

—A big moose made its appearance in Levant, Me. A citizen who forgot it was close time, and seizing his rifle, shot the animal in a neighbor's yard, has just paid the fine of $100. It was quite costly sport for him, but he consoled himself with the thought that a moose doesn't walk up to the muzzle of a gun every day.

—Judge D. C. Dawkins, of Jacksonville, has a unique Masonic souvenir sent him by a friend in Delaware. It is a square, compasses and letter G symmetrically molded, and labeled: "Made of United States National Bank notes, redeemed and macerated at the United States Treasury Department, estimated $15,000."

—In 1795 Mr. Pitt proposed a tax on persons wearing hair powder, which he estimated would bring to the revenue £21,000 annually, but it was the death-blow to the custom, for its use was immediately discontinued. Those persons who contined to use it were termed guinea pigs, because one guinea was the amount per head of the tax.

—By means of an electric wire at Domene, France, the power of a waterfall is transmitted three and a quarter miles from its source, to a paper mill, and there utilized to the extent of two hundred horse-power. In the winter, when the deep snow for about two months prevents any but electric communication between the generating works and the mill, the power is sent as usual, and the machinery of the paper mill is kept in motion.

—The Sidney, O., public school senior class were all expelled this year just a short time before the close of the schools. All of the members of the class had prepared their graduating essays, and as the school board refused to reinstate them they hired a hall, charged 25 cents admission and had a commencement of their own. The citizens of Sidney admired the spunk displayed by the class and patronized them so well that it netted each one a neat sum, and the entire class took a trip to Niagara Falls with the proceeds.

—The liquor law is successfully evaded by Greenberry Williams, who has a farm, portions of which lie in Sumner, Macon and Tronsdale Counties, Tennessee. Each patron is blindfolded, told to "step to the right, then march to the rear, then by the left flank," etc. When he is asked what county he is in, of course he is unable to answer. The desired quantity of liquor is given to him, the money is received, the man is led back to the point he started from, and the bandage is removed from his eyes. Under such circumstances no witness can testify in what county he bought his liquor. Several attempts have been made to convict Williams of selling without a license, but all of them have failed.

—The parents of a young lady in the city who is the possessor of a fine musical voice are fond of relating an incident which occurred in her early childhood. Nellie was three or four years old and had not learned how to sing. She was, however, very fond of singing, and one day a little girl about eight or nine years old, visiting at the house, sang to her. Nellie listened attentively all through the song, but just as the singer concluded cried as if her heart would break. Her father tried to comfort her, and Nellie at last said in a muffled voice and without raising her head: "Oh, papa, please buy me a sing." It was found unnecessary to buy the "sing," as the little girl soon discovered that she had one.—New Haven Palladium.

VERY DISCOURAGING.

How Miss Amy Interpreted Love-Sick Mr. Goslin's Dream.

"I had a dream last night which ought to interest you, Miss Amy."

This remark was made by young Mr. Goslin, who was paying his addresses, or endeavoring to do so, to the young lady.

Miss Amy was not so anxious for this paying as some of Mr. Goslin's creditors were for the application of that treatment to numerous accounts which bore Mr. Goslin's name as debtor.

She had given him hints which would have convinced any young man of ordinary intelligence that his suit was hopeless, but Goslin persevered with a cheerful idiocy which would have called forth sympathy from a graven image.

"What was the dream?" asked the girl.

"I dreamed we were married to each other," replied Goslin, enthusiastically, and then he asked, "what do you think of that?"

"O, that's all right."

"You dear creature," Goslin exclaimed, ecstatically; "you make me so happy!"

He attempted to embrace her, but she eluded him, and replied:

"I didn't intend to."

"Why—why," stammered Goslin, "you said the dream was all right, and I thought——."

"Yes, it is all right," added the maiden; "you know dreams always go by contraries."—W. H. Siviter, in Munsey's Weekly.

What the Gulf of Mexico Promises to Become Some Day.

The Gulf of Mexico will some day be the Mediterranean sea of the New World. Along its shores the new empires of the world will grow to power. There is not on the globe a sheet of water so favorable to commerce and whose shores are so richly endowed. The Mediterranean in its glory, though more picturesque and entrancing in the light of its great history, was not so blessed by the splendid prodigality of nature. Beyond its shores was Cimmerian darkness and nothing more. No majestic Mississippi, the natural channel for the commerce of the richest country of the world, poured its treasures upon the waters. And yet it nourished the mightiest nations of the world and floated for two thousand years the gold-laden ships of Phœnicia and Solomon, the olive and grape and wheat galleys of Greece and Rome, the magnificent argosies of Naples, Genoa and Venice, and the galleons of Spain.

Consider for a moment the great advantages of the Gulf, as indicating by silent prophecy the future, of out Mediterranean. A climate, as balmy as Italy's, warms its waters and its shores. It is almost inclosed by rich shores of continent and islands. To the south is Yucatan, yellow with bananas and oranges and lemons. To the west is Mexico, richer to-day than in the splendid reigns of the Montezumas, and with brighter hopes of still greater prosperity. To the north is the most favored country of earth—the United States. From the Rio Grande to Cape Sable the rich, warm coast incloses the Gulf in a half embrace. To the east are the West Indies, Cuba, gem of the ocean, and to the southeast is the Caribbean, leading to the republics of Central America and the Spanish republics of our sister continent.

These shores will yet be the scenes of a prosperity such as the world has not yet witnessed. That is their clear destiny. The most fertile lands in the world are in the wide valley of the Mississippi. The whole Gulf coast is fertile, rich in semi-tropical and even tropical fruits and forests. The world has no other islands that will match the Antilles, and no shore that can rival the Gulf coast of the United States.

The Gulf is not, like the Mediterranean, dependent upon its shores. The long, broad sweep of the Mississippi drains not only its own matchless valley, but bears on its bosom the tribute from the Ohio, Cumberland and Tennessee, draining the best sections towards the east, and the Missouri, draining the exhaustless Northwest. This traffic will yet send down the Father of Waters to float on the Gulf waves argosies of commerce richer than was ever borne in the galleons of Spain or floated under the guns of Dandolo.

Again, the Gulf will yet be the ocean highway of nations. It is the great natural basin of two continents. It is said two blocks of wood if dropped one each in the fountain sources of the Amazon and the Mississippi would meet on the waters of the Gulf. In a few years a canal or a ship railway will connect the Atlantic and Pacific not at Panama, but at Nicaragua. Over the waters, then, of the Caribbean and Gulf will pass the merchant fleets as they girdle the globe. When these things come, as they surely and shortly will, New Orleans will be the Tyre, or Marseilles, or Constantinople of the new Mediterranean, and the South will be the Mediterranean shores of the New World.—Atlanta Journal.